

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the present application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain(s) under examination in the application is presented below. The claims are presented in ascending order and each includes one status identifier. Those claims not cancelled or withdrawn but amended by the current amendment utilize the following notations for amendment: 1. deleted matter is shown by strikethrough for six or more characters and double brackets for five or fewer characters; and 2. added matter is shown by underlining.

1-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) An aircraft comprising a landing gear moveable between a stowed position and a deployed position, the landing gear including a wheel/tire assembly, said wheel/tire assembly including a wheel having a rim around which there is mounted a tire, wherein

(a) the tire and the rim are each so shaped that a gap is defined between a surface of the rim and a surface of the tire,

(b) a separate part is provided at the junction between the tire and the rim ~~which closes said gap~~, and

(c) said separate part has

(i) a first surface ~~in contact with that~~ abuts the tire,

(ii) a second surface in contact with the rim, and

(iii) a third surface

which extends between the first surface and the second surface, ~~and~~

~~which follows a notional surface that smoothly envelopes the wheel so as~~  
to provide a surface to smooth and close the gap in the region of the  
junction between the tire and the wheel rim,

whereby on at least one side of the wheel, during use of the landing gear on an aircraft when airborne and the landing gear is in a position ready for landing of the aircraft, the third surface of said separate part acts to reduce the noise that would result in the absence of the

separate part from the interaction of the gap and the airflow during approach of the aircraft on landing and wherein

(d) on at least one side of the wheel during use of the aircraft when airborne and the landing gear is in a position ready for landing of the aircraft, the surface of the wheel/tire assembly presented to the airflow ~~within~~ across the part bounded by the widest part of the tire is substantially ~~smooth in shape~~ flat.

16. (Previously Presented) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein at least a portion of said separate part is flexible and so arranged that it may be moved manually to reveal a portion of the tire that is otherwise hidden from view.

17. (Previously Presented) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein said separate part is defined at least partly by an elastically deformable material.

18. (Previously Presented) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein said separate part is defined by a multiplicity of flexible elements each extending radially across the junction between the tire and the rim.

19. (Withdrawn) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein said region is defined by brushes, which bridge a gap between the wheel rim and the tire.

20. (Previously Presented) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein at least a portion of said separate part is so configured that, once the force between the wheels and the ground exceeds a first given threshold force, it moves out of a gap that said separate part bridges when the aircraft is airborne, and once the force between the wheels and the ground drops to or below a second given threshold force, it moves back to the position in which it bridges the gap.

21. (Withdrawn) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein said region is defined by a sealing element, which bridges a gap between the wheel rim and the tire.

22. (Withdrawn) An aircraft according to claim 21, wherein the sealing element is formed from liquid sealant material that has been solidified.

23. (Previously Presented) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein the separate part is disposed on both sides of the wheel such that, during use of the landing gear on an aircraft when airborne and the landing gear is in a position ready for landing of the aircraft, the surface of each separate part interfaces smoothly with a surface, presented to the airflow, of the tire and a surface, presented to the airflow, of the wheel.

24. (Withdrawn) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein said region is defined by a separate component part of the wheel.

25. (Withdrawn) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein, on at least one side of the wheel during use of the aircraft when airborne and the landing gear is in a position ready for landing of the aircraft, the surface of the wheel/tire assembly presented to the airflow within the region bounded by the widest part of the tire is substantially smooth in shape.

26. (Withdrawn) An aircraft according to claim 25, wherein said surface of the wheel/tire assembly is substantially planar.

27. (Previously Presented) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein the aircraft is of a size suitable for carrying more than 50 passengers.

28. (Currently Amended) A retractable aircraft landing gear including a wheel/tire assembly, said wheel/tire assembly including a wheel having a rim around which there is mounted a tire, wherein the wheel further includes at least one part that smoothly envelopes the junction between the tire and the rim, said at least one part being shaped such that on at least one side of the wheel, during use of the landing gear on an aircraft when airborne and the landing gear is in a position ready for landing of the aircraft, a surface exposed to the airflow of said at least one part interfaces smoothly between a surface, exposed to the airflow, of the tire and a surface, exposed to the airflow, of the wheel so that in use the flow of air past said at least one part is streamlined and wherein on at least one side of the wheel when the landing gear is in a position ready for landing of the aircraft, the surface of the wheel/tire assembly presented to the airflow ~~within~~ across the part bounded by the widest part of the tire is substantially ~~smooth in shape~~ flat.

29. (Previously Presented) A method of reducing noise caused by an aircraft during approach of the aircraft on landing including a step of modifying an existing design of an aircraft in order to reduce noise caused by the landing gear of the aircraft, and a step of manufacturing an aircraft according to claim 15.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Withdrawn) A component for use as said separate component of an aircraft according to claim 24.

32. (Withdrawn) An annular sealing element, said sealing element including a first side and a second side, wherein the first side includes a gap filler structure to close a gap between a tire and a wheel rim and the second side is planar so that it interfaces smoothly with the tire and the wheel to form a streamlined surface.

33. (Previously Presented) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein the first surface follows the shape of the tire.

34. (Previously Presented) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein the second surface follows the shape of rim.

35. (Previously Presented) An aircraft according to claim 15, wherein the surface of the wheel/tire assembly presented to the airflow, within the part bounded by the widest part of the tire is substantially planar.